DR-CAFTA FACT SHEET

- ✓ On May 28, 2004, the United States, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua signed the U.S.-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA).

- ✓ On August 5, 2004, the Dominican Republic was added to the agreement. The new agreement was titled the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement, or the DR-CAFTA.

- ✓ Under TPA, there is no timeframe in which the Administration must submit DR-CAFTA implementing legislation to Congress.

- ✓ Normally, the Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees each hold a hearing on possible FTAs. Both Committees are scheduled to have CAFTA hearings.

- ✓ Next, the Administration will send draft implementing language to Capitol Hill and the Committees will hold non-markups.

- ✓ A non-markup is not binding. It is an opportunity for Congressional feedback. Before submitting the final legislation, the Administration consults with the Committees of jurisdiction to decide jointly how to draft U.S. law to implement the agreements, while addressing Congressional concerns and remaining consistent with the agreements.

- ✓ The Administration will then send final and formal implementing language to Congress. Once that is done, the bill will be considered under TPA procedures.

- ✓ Ways and Means has 45 legislative days in which to report the bill (no amendments, just a yes or no vote); otherwise it is automatically discharged to the House floor for a vote, unless Members vote to changes in the expedited procedures.

- ✓ Once CAFTA leaves the Committee, the House then has 15 days in which to vote on the final implementing legislation. No amendment may be offered, and it is an up-or-down vote.

- ✓ Because the bills passed by both the House and Senate must be identical, there is no need to reconcile different versions. Once both bodies approve, the FTA goes to the President for his signature.